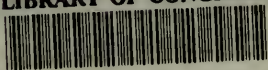


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GEORGE GILBERT WEEKS

SKETCH BOOK

or

A Few Lines In Verse

POEMS

BY

GEORGE G. WEEKS

PUBLISHED AND UNPUBLISHED



NEWARK, N. J.

1919

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BY

GEO. G. WEEKS.

Author.



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TO THE
TEACHERS OF MY YOUTH
AT THE OLD
CENTRAL GRAMMAR SCHOOL,
AND OF
OLD PUBLIC SCHOOL, NUMBER THIRTY FIVE;
BOTH OF
BROOKLYN, N. Y.
FROM 1874 TO 1884,
TO WHOSE EFFORTS IN PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
THIS IS AN IMPERFECT RESPONSE,
THIS VOLUME IS DEDICATED
BY
THE AUTHOR,

George Gilbert Weeks.

FOREWORD

Every last man of us owes much of that to which he has attained, to the early influences, that, insensibly perhaps, have had a potent effect on his later decisions and line of action.

This is true, in a lesser degree, of the more recent friendships, and even of society as a whole, in its general trend, resist it as we may.

It is in recognition of this fact, and because of this borrowed inspiration, that I place this little volume in your hands.

THE AUTHOR.

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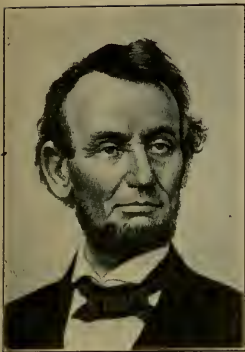
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POEMS

SKETCH BOOK



“And when the victory shall be complete, when there shall be neither a slave nor a drunkard on the earth, how proud the title of that land which may truly claim to be the birthplace and the cradle of both those revolutions, that shall have ended in that victory; how nobly distinguished that people who shall have planted and nurtured to maturity both the political and moral freedom of their species.”

ABRAHAM LINCOLN:—Columbia's pride;
Chief of her heroes who suffered and died;
Best beloved face in her proud Halls of Fame;—
We honor thy name.

This the best tribute to what he has done:—
States once dissevered, united as one,
Purged by his life-blood from slavery's shame:—
We honor the name.

Firm for the Right, though vast legions should fall;
Tempered by clemency reaching to all;
Justice with charity ever his aim:—
We honor the name.

Martyr, still mourned by a nation bereaved;
Prophet, of victories still unachieved;
Statesman untarnished, unselfish in aim;
We honor thy name.

A MOTHER'S LOVE

ON mother's breast
 He, sleeping, smiled.
So safely rest
 Beloved child.
A watchful care
 Like that above,
Protects you there;—
 A mother's love.

Sleep sweetly, dear,
 And smile and sigh.
No foe is here,
 No danger nigh
Thy nestling place.
 Still broods above,
With tender grace,
 A mother's love.

In early youth,
 In manhood's prime;
In paths of truth,
 Or marred by crime;
True as at birth,
 Still prize above
All ties of Earth:—
 A mother's love.

A SOLILOQUY

(*Viola*)

I KNOW a spot where the violets grow,
Dog-tooth and yellow, and white and blue,
Deep in its solitude would I go
And dream of you.

Coyly they hide in their mossy bed,
Snow-white and golden, and heavenly blue.
Each lovely flower must hang its head
At sight of you.

Gold may be sullied, and white be cold;
Blue will soon fade:—Ever warm, and true,
Purer and dearer than sordid gold
To me—are you.

Violets droop in the Summer heat;
Dreary the spot where the flowers grew;
But there is one that is ever sweet;—
That flow'r—is you.

A SOUL

EACH soul is precious, it is said.

To set a value I'll be bold.

The soul that loves the most—is gold :—
The selfish soul is lead.

* * * * *

A STAINLESS FLAG

THE Stars and Stripes fly everywhere,
And soldiers fill the city street;
And stirring strains of music greet
The many thousands gathered there.
Memorial Day has come again,—
A nation joins in chorus,
To praise the true and loyal men,
Who shed their life-blood for us.

They freely offered up their lives
That all our people might be free;
That peace secured, prosperity
Might be assured to him who strives.
Let us complete what they began,—
Affirm at each election,—
NO SYSTEM THAT ENSLAVES A MAN
SHALL HAVE THAT FLAG'S PROTECTION!

Unfurl that blood-bought flag above
The shop, the schoolhouse and the home!
From Capitol and State-house dome
Long wave the banner that we love!
Throw its protecting folds about
Each useful occupation;
But put all agencies to rout
That tend to degradation.

See where that gilded gate to hell;
That mocks at laws, and sells its slaves
For pelf to office-seeking knaves;
Displays that flag we love so well!
Shall we the calls of Justice drown,
Nor heed its victims' death-groans?
The Stars and Stripes in shame haul down;—
Run up the Skull and Cross-bones!

Inspired by Him who formed each star,—
And by the blood our fathers shed,—
And by the stainless lives they led;—
LET NOT THIS CURSE OUR FUTURE MAR!
The Stars—for every hero bold
Who would lift up another:—
But stripes for him who for base gold
Enslaves his weaker brother!

BUT ONCE

"BUT once we pass this way."

Then let us scatter all the cheer
And love we may ;

Provoke the smile, where now's the tear ;—
"But once we pass this way."

COOK'S CAKES

"Cook's markings on those cakes of hers
Resemble Chinese characters,"
Says Pa. "They look," says Sister Ann,
"Like laundry checks, sure enough.
Bub, take one to the Chinaman,
He may give you a cuff."

DEMOCRACY,
OR
THE SPIRIT OF DEMOCRACY

WHAT is the spirit of Democracy?
And of what sort of stuff is it composed?
It is mankind's God-given legacy;—
A vital, sacred trust in man reposed.

The haughty Autocrat has had his day:—
Descendant of the tyrant of the past.
To rights too long ignored he must give way;
For all men, Freedom's day has dawned at last.

A relic of barbaric days is he;
Assuming that a Right Divine requires
His subjects servile manikins to be,
Manipulated deftly as by wires.

Mere puppets they, who in such claims believe,
And through such bald assumption can not see.
Such craven lack of spirit can't conceive
The spirit of a true Democracy.

Who are so blinded that they can not see
Servility is never liberty?
'Tis every man's inherent right to be
The architect of his own destiny.

Let this conviction inspiration bring,
Till all that's mortal lies beneath the sod:—
That every honest man's an uncrowned King;—
Uncrowned—till he appears before his God.

DON'T BE BLUE!

“WHATCHER goin’ to do
When things go wrong?
Don’t keep feelin’ blue;
Jes’ sing a song!
That’s what to do when things go wrong.”

FALL IS HERE!

FALL is here!

Summer goes, and Winter's near.

Nature dons her gay attire;

Green, and gold, and flaring fire;

Summer lingers to admire.

Gala season of the year.

Fall is here!

Fall is here!

Whispering in the ripe corn's ear

That the time has come to go

To the garner, ere the snow

Falls once more, and chill winds blow.

Harvest season of the year.

Fall is here!

Fall is here!

Frosty nights, crisp, bright, and clear,

Burst the forest giant's grip:—

From its grasp its treasures slip.

Seek them out, the branches whip!

Store up nuts for all the year.

Fall is here!

Fall is here!
Autumn days are full of cheer.
And the Jack-o'-lantern's light
Gives the turkeys such a fright!
'Round "Thanksgiving" well it might.
Homing time of all the year.
Fall is here!

FATHER'S HAND

I stood upon the shore. Before me spread
The boundless sea. Its billows rolled and tossed.
My heart with awe o'ercome seemed filled with dread
Of that vast power that many a life has cost.

What agent can such force command?

My Father's Hand.

Up where the beetling cliffs rear up their heads
Above the stream; a rampart steep and high;
I gaze upon the scene which round me spreads.
A prospect grand! Too vast for mortal eye.

I ask what caused them thus to stand?

My Father's Hand.

See where the rushing waters seethe and roar
And cast themselves down headlong! See the spray
That rises like a cloud! Vast lakes outpour
Their contents to this chaos, day by day.

What loosed this mighty torrent grand?

My Father's Hand.

A monster cold and grim stalks through the land,
His stony heart no pity knows. He takes
The mother from the child with ruthless hand;
Nor matters it to him whose heart he breaks.

What help the last foe to withstand?

My Father's Hand.

I need not fear the mighty hosts of sin,
Or hidden snares by men or devils planned
Or the rough road where Jesus' feet have been,
Nor in the shadow of the cross to stand,—
 If I but keep my hand within
 My Father's Hand.

GAULEY

MR. GAULEY took the train,
And bragged that in his case,
His friend, the new conductor,
Would pass him "on his face."

But now, alas:—'tis sad to see,
And much to his disgrace;
He wears court plaster now, for he
Was thrown out on his face.

HAIL! NEWARK!

1666—Two Hundred and Fiftieth Anniversary—1916.

HAIL! Newark! Pride of our fair State.
Within thine ample bounds confined
Earth's many races congregate,
And in thy busy marts do find
An open door to every man.
Yes, to each thrifty Son of Toil,
Since first the sturdy Puritan
Set foot upon thy virgin soil.

What foresight rare and keen was theirs.
Where once their hands had tilled the ground
Are now thy busy thoroughfares
Where wares of every land are found.
So Industry has left its mark,
With Education hand in hand;
While tow'ring over street and park,
See many a House of Worship stand.

Here are the sons of every land,
Each adding to thy wealth a part:
All strong in thy defense to stand,
O, Newark, dear to every heart.
Yes, linked with those of patriot sires,
Whose forebears felt oppression's heel,
And from their lurid signal fires
Went forth to combat steel with steel.

As we the present turmoil see,
The many complex projects yield
A glimpse of what thou art to be,
To our prophetic sight revealed:
That when our hands and tongues have ceased;
In deeds achieved and laurels won,
Thou, Master City of the East,
Need bow thy noble head to none.

So shall we all together stand
To augment thy prosperity.
Let it be known throughout the land
That for thy future it shall be
The pledge of every loyal son
Whose brain and brawn within thee mix,
To amplify what was begun
In Sixteen Hundred Sixty-six.

HE PASSES BY!

JESUS passes by!

The lonely widow, poor and broken-hearted,
Who mourns the son that death from her has parted,
Has heard the cry.

"Young man: I say to thee, arise!"

Her son, once dead, now living, dries her eyes.

He passes by.

Jesus passes by!

And the blind beggar, sitting by the highway,
Roused by the rush of feet from road and byway;
He hears the cry.

"Oh! give me but my sight!" he cries:—

And at His touch new vision greets his eyes.

He passes by.

Jesus passes by!

A loathsome leper, foul and isolated,
Body decayed, and powers dissipated,
Now hears the cry.

"Have pity, Lord!"—One touch.—And then

New health is giv'n, and he is whole again.

He passes by.

Jesus passes by!

Out from the tombs, by demons torn and driven,
The madman rushes. E'en to him is given

To hear the cry.

"Come out of him!" Devils combined

Take flight, and leave the man in his right mind.

He passes by.

Jesus passes by!

"All power is giv'n to Me in earth and heaven,"

The Master says. His servants are the leaven;

Yes, you and I;

To spread through all the mass of Man,

Wherever found, what sympathy we can

As we pass by.

HOPE'S ANGEL

CHILL and damp the air.
It seemed that Spring would never come
With all its fragrance wafted from
Fruit-trees' blossoms fair.

Winter, loathe to part,
Still worked o'er Earth its death-like spell,
And cold winds blew, and snowflakes fell
On her throbbing heart.

One sweet flower fair
Had come to cheer our eager eyes;
Had braved the snow, the leaden skies,
And the chilly air.

But when brighter skies
And warmer breezes break the spell,
And blossoms sprinkle hill and dell,
Lo! the flower dies.

So when sorrow's chill
Has held us in its icy spell,
Some blessing sent our grief to quell,
Bids us hope on still.

As the flower dies,
When happiness has come again
And all our joys we would retain;
Oft Hope's Angel flies.

IN MEMORIAM

ONE Sabbath-day, I wandered through
The portals of the "city of the dead."
The scene presented to my view
Was one of beauty conquering the dread
That thoughts of death inspire. The trees
New clad; flow'rs nodding in the breeze
O'er many a sleeping head.

And many costly tombs were there,
And many monuments, both new and old,
With carved inscriptions speaking fair
Of those whose bodies lay beneath the mold.
Of some, but few had ever heard;
Of others, no one breathes a word
Of that which might be told.

And then the hope passed through my mind
That when my mortal frame is laid to rest,
Some word of cheer, or action kind,
May cause some tear to fall above my breast.
No costly stone above me rear;—
Grant but some proof that I was dear
To those who knew me best.

"JUDGE NOT"

WHY should I grudge what aid I can
Extend to every brother man
Who in the path of virtue halts?
Have I no faults?

Shall I, the evil action done,
Be quick to judge the fallen one?
I'll let the Sinless One alone
"First cast a stone."

LEST YE FORGET—FAIR TENNESSEE

HONOR to noble Carmack give!
Since Crime decreed he might not live
In flesh and blood, let Right enthrone
His image in enduring stone;
Lest the foul stain forgotten be,
Fair Tennessee!

A noble statesman, true as steel;—
In contrast strong to those who kneel
And cringe should Greed or Bacchus nod;—
No one his master save his God.
May many such be borne to thee,—
Fair Tennessee.

With voice and pen he dared defy
Vice long entrenched, till silenced by
The arguments that cowards use
When plot and slander fail. You lose
A hero soul ill spared by thee,—
Fair Tennessee.

For thee he showered mighty blows
Upon our nation's deadliest foes:—
For thee he struggled night and day;
For thee his heart's-blood ebbed away:—
Its crimson stain lies dark on thee—
Fair Tennessee!

Should such vile scandal ever live?
A true state's chief executive,—
The right hand of the State, O shame!
Has cast a blot on thy fair name,
 To grant assassins liberty!
 Fair Tennessee!

Oh, when shall righteousness prevail?
When shall the rum-trade's slimy trail
Cease to invade thy Halls of State?
Rouse freemen;—ere it be too late!
 A martyr's blood cries out to thee!
 Fair Tennessee!

LITTLE FEET

LITTLE feet run pit-a-patter :—
We'll not weary of their clatter ;
For the time will come apace
When another home they'll grace.

MILESTONES OF THE YEARS

(On a Sister's Birthday)

WE travel onward one and all;
How like a journey life appears:—
And so each birthday we may call
A milestone of the years.

Sometimes no friendly voice is nigh;
Sometimes some loving consort cheers;
We need our friends as we pass by
The milestones of the years.

Like April's showers and sunshine mixed,
Our joys are not unmixed with tears:—
'Tis not all flow'rs and sunshine 'twixt
The milestones of the years.

Choose but the paths that upward wind,
The poisoned mists of doubts and fears
Will vanish as we leave behind
The milestones of the years.

MOTIVES

WE may conceal our motives true
By wiles and arts:—
Spread out our best to others' view:—
God knows our hearts.

OBEDIENCE

WHEN God would Amalek destroy,
With all his hosts and flocks and herds
And all that he possessed; what could annoy
Him more than finding that His words
Were heeded not by him whom He had sent
To do His bidding? And what wrath was His
When told that all the flocks and herds were meant
To be for sacrifice to Him. And then it is
We hear His words, plain and concise:—
“Obedience is better than sacrifice!”

And when He bids us come apart,
Array ourselves against the wrongs
That bring despair to many a burdened heart;
Shall we still mingle with the throngs
That madly struggle in their greed for gain,
And caring not who may be crushed and bruised?
Oh! As we bring the spoils we thus obtain,
Shall not acceptance of our offering be refused?
Shall we not hear that word concise:—
“Obedience is better than sacrifice”?

PATIENCE

DON'T think the world is going wrong
When things don't go your way;—
For when to-morrow comes along
You'll understand to-day.

SABBATH THOUGHTS

HARK! On the ear falls the chiming of bells,
Filling the air with their sweet mellow tones.
Welcome their song; of the worship it tells
Of Him who regardeth our joys and our moans.

Welcome the day when the weary find rest!
Welcome the message refreshing the soul!
Welcome the fellowships, sacred and blest!
Welcome Him most who doth hallow the whole.

Yes, we may be where no bell thrills the ear;
No blessed message from chancel be heard;
No kindred spirit be near us to cheer;
There we may find Him as true as His Word.

If He is near us in solitude's hour,
Thrilling our hearts with the sense of His love,
Bidding us draw on His infinite power,
Lifting our thoughts to the raptures above,

Why should we so often think that the day
We spend in worship is all that's His due?
Why is the message, proclaimed that we may
Practice its teachings, remembered by few?

No day should limit our worship of Him,
He who still guards us each moment we live.
No walls should bound, no conditions should dim
Faith's view of Him in the service we give.

"Ye are my witnesses." How the words ring!
Out by the river-side, seashore and mart.
Not alone where we His praises may sing;—
Wherever our story may gladden a heart.

SAVED BY WIRELESS

SEE how the gallant steamship plows the main,
And leaves a frothing furrow in her train!
The mighty billows hurl themselves in vain
 Against her cleaving prow.
Upon the bridge her fearless captain stands;
For he, upon the vessel he commands,
 Is monarch now.

A thousand souls are trusting in her weal!
A thousand souls trust in her walls of steel!
Anticipation fast outflies her keel,
 Of scenes across the sea:—
Of verdant vine-clad terraces and hills,
Where snow-capped peak and hot volcano thrills
 With ecstasy.

But now a heavy haze envelops all,
And night casts over her its sable pall.
Shut in from all the world may naught befall
 Her slumb'ring human freight.

.

See! from the gloom it comes! A shape! A crash!
And groans and hissing steam rise from the gash
 That seals her fate.

For as some savage prowler of the deep
In search of prey, does from concealment creep,
And unsuspected on his victim leap,
 So strikes the hidden foe.
And cruel death invades her gaping side,
And that keen bow, with plates torn open wide,
 That struck the blow.

And now conspire the allies, Fog and Night,
To hide from all the world her awful plight,
And claim their frenzied victims ere the light
 Of the returning sun.
No rocket's gleam, nor bell, nor whistle shrill
Can pierce the dense and ebon curtain till
 The deed is done.

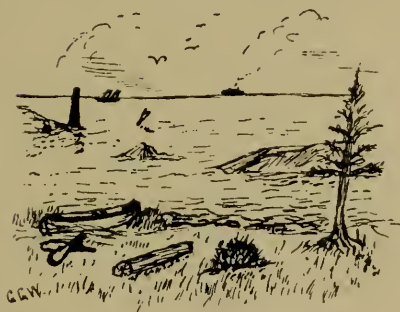
The cool telegrapher is at his key,
And magic messages soon scour the sea;
Flash through the fog the urgent "S. O. S.,"
 "A vessel in distress!"
And soon their succor comes, from far and near,
And hope and comfort banish cold and fear
 And helplessness.

What though the ship lies forty fathoms down
With store and chattels rich, and costly gown:—
Not all the gems that grace a monarch's crown
 Are worth a single soul.

.
How great the men of genius, who, to lend
Assistance to their kind, Earth's forces bend
 To their control!

SHALLOWS

SHALLOWS suit the little draught
Of the saucy pleasure craft:—
Laden ships, with treasure low,
Must the deeper channel know.



SPRING IDYL

A BALMY night
In early Spring,
By moonlight bright:—
Warm breezes bring
The promise fair
Of fragrant fields
And blossoms rare:—
And nature yields
To such a spell;
The heart grows warm
And tender.

Out in the night
They come in pairs:—
A pretty sight!
The old moon wears
A smile to see
This promise fair
Of things to be.
The balmy air
Works such a spell,
That hearts grow warm
And tender.

THE FIEND AVENGER

A Legend of To-day

COME with me and let us wander
From the city's turmoil madd'ning,
To where quiet Nature gladd'ning
Tired vision, spreads up yonder
From the cliffs that tower o'er us,
Such a vast expanse of beauty,
That all thoughts of irksome duty
Vanish at the scene before us.

Just before, the peaceful river
Slowly ebbs toward the ocean
With a grand and stately motion.
On its breast the white sails quiver
In the fitful breeze that's blowing:
Boats that look like playthings plying
Up and down with pennants flying
On some unknown mission going.

From the far bank clothed in verdure
Rise the heights. While, dim and hazy,
Distant hills appear; and lazy
Clouds float by. As in a merger
Earth and sky seem joined together
In the distance. Nature tending
To one grand harmonious blending
In the dreamy Summer weather.

Down the cliff with frequent bending
Leads a roadway, steep and lonely,
So concealed by trees that only
Here and there its course descending
May be followed. Far below you
From this dizzy elevation
You may see its destination
By the ruined wharf I show you.

Should we but turn our backs again
Upon this scene, we see a wooded plain
That crowns the cliffs for miles to left and right,
And should we stroll along the road we might
By following its turning from the crest,
Still on, then downward toward the West,
Pass costly mansions, lawns that look
Like velvet carpet, cross a babbling brook
That flows beneath the road to form a lake
Where children sport; still downward we might take
Our way, to where the ivy-covered church and manse
Stand to our left so stately, grand. One glance
About us would assure us that we stood
Within the quiet city Englewood. :

Far up the road that mounts the hill
Once stood a noble mansion. There may still
Remain some evidence of where it stood
In gray stone, brick and plaster or charred wood.
A lordly home it was, with vines entwined,
With trees and shrubbery designed
To yield continual bloom. One might
From off its spacious porch see such a sight:
Of meadows green and waving fields of grain,
Dotted with cozy cottages, a train

Or two that chainlike clouds of steam and smoke betray,
And distant azure mountains; that a day
Would scarce suffice to feast the ravished eyes
Upon the scene that here so peaceful lies.

Here in this paradise there dwelt
A man of many interests, who dealt
In stocks and bonds of ventures new and old,
And all this Midas touched seemed turned to gold,—
So far as his exchequer was concerned.
Some thought his hoard was dearly earned.
He saw the need to sow some seed,
Or there would be no harvest for his greed.
And so he sprinkled here and there a gift
To varied charities where heralds swift
Would spread the news abroad so all the world might know
That one good man dwelt in this world below.
A worthy deacon was our Brother B——,
Such timber makes an excellent trustee.

One day into his office came
A pale but sweet-faced girl, of slender frame,
Whose dress of sober black betokened loss
Of some one near and dear. A heavy cross
It was she had to bear. A father fond
Had left this, for the world beyond,
And left behind a sickly wife
And this their only child to bear the strife
With a too oft unsympathetic world
To those who need. Beneath the smoke that curled
Above the trees by the befouled Passaic's side
A little plain white cottage seeks to hide
Among the trees and bushes. Their home may
Have been a little Eden in its day.

And so with heavy heart she took
Her place with others. Some by word or look
Good will expressed, but one close friendship sought
And proved a sister true as years they wrought
Together side by side. Until one Spring
Her friend displayed a jeweled ring.
Yes, the old story had been told
To willing ears by some young suitor bold.
And soon her place was filled; but now by one
Who made her aim in life, display and fun.
Her beauty was of face and figure,—not of heart.
We know not what it means when friends depart.
For now a modest, shapely maiden fair,
Was the pale, slender girl that first came there.

But one with evil eye had seen
The change, and sought to take advantage mean
Of her dependence and adversity.
So wealth would make a spoil of poverty.
Back from dictation to her usual place,
With flashing eyes and crimsoned face,
One day with hurried step she came;
And sought in tears to try to drown the shame
And panic that her countenance expressed.
When her companion saw her so distressed
She knew the cause. "You dear, old-fashioned innocent,"
She said, "don't be so hasty to resent
What may be but a little pleasantry;
There's wisdom in a little coquetry."

As many a subtle poison works
Its slow destruction, so there hidden lurks
Such venom in the tongue of a false friend.
The nurse and doctor needed to attend

Her feeble mother now so near the grave
Took all that she could earn or save.
And soon there came the greater blow,
And now the place that once was home must go.
Disheartened now she seeks a place to board
Such as the crowded city can afford.
But scarcely had her cheeks regained their healthful bloom
The tempter sought his tactics to resume.
The present always given at Christmas-tide
Was to each given but to her denied.

"There must of course be some mistake,
See me when you are through and I will make
Amends for such a stupid oversight;
And then I think I'll need your help to-night,"
He said. He who had daily studied men
And women in his silken den.

—The supper at the grand hotel—
And all that followed after—need we tell?
The fly is in the meshes soft but strong.
Will cruel disillusion linger long?
Some circumstances from some people none can hide,
The foolish in the foolish oft confide,
To seek advice wise virtue does not need,
To hide a fault and cover up a deed.

.

But Summer now has come once more,
One evening comes a knock upon her door.
"Some one to see you, Mum," the maid explains;
She hastens down the stairs and scarce restrains
An exclamation of surprise. "Why, Fred!
Whatever brought you here?" she said.
"Our long acquaintance made me bold
To seek you out. I heard the house was sold,

Inquired your present lodging, and so came
All uninvited, nerved to take what blame
My heart brings on my head. For busy college life
Does not obscure the fact I need a wife
To grace the learned professor's western home;—
So Cupid drew my feet to hither roam."

So school day friendships stronger grow
And childish fancies haunt us as we go
From old familiar scenes and faces dear,
To strange and distant fields; though many a year
Pass o'er our heads. This much and more he said,
And for her hand in wedlock plead.
He hoped when the Fall term began
To have her there with him—a happy man.
But she, with startled look and downcast eye,
Stood pale and thoughtful,—but he knew not why;
And then, with trembling voice and eyelids wet with tears,
Replied, "Dear Fred, and have you all these years
So thought of me? But grant me this respite,
That I may answer you to-morrow night."

.

It was a time of burning drought,
A hot July. One night I ventured out
To walk along the road toward the cliff,
That I of some stray breeze might get a whiff;—
Too hot to think of sleep on such a night!
'Twas still as death. The moonbeams bright
Cast over all a silver sheen
Save where some patch of shadow might be seen
Outlined upon the road; or denser shade
By giants of the neighboring woodland made.
Still, now and then some night-bird's cry broke on the ear
And died away as soon. The sky once clear
Assumed a darker shade toward the West;
Some promise for the land by heat oppressed.

Ere long upon the cliff I stood:
Behind me was the dark and lonely wood,
Before my eyes the sparking river flowed
Three hundred feet below. The winding road
Climbed dark beneath my feet,—I strained my eyes;—
For some strange vapor seemed to rise
Just where it touched the river's bank,
And follow up its windings. To be frank,
My courage failed me at so weird a sight,
For nothing human sought that road at night.
Then quickly hastened to some rocks that overlook
Where it emerges on the road I took
To reach the cliff; in time to see a sight
To make one's blood run colder in affright.

In white, bedrabbled, pale and fair
A woman's form, impalpable as air,
Borne in the arms of such a monstrous shape
As seemed to be part man, part fiend, part ape,
Distorted, hideous, black as blackest night,
Yet bounded by a sulphurous light
That played upon his outline grim,
As lithe and swift in stride, and strong of limb
He bore his ghostly burden, not a sound
Was heard; save when his feet passed o'er the ground
A crackling as of snapping twigs. His red eyes gleamed
Like balls of flame, and from his nostrils seemed
To pass a fiery blast. 'Twas such a sight
That passed before my eyes that Summer night.

Straight on toward the town he strode,
I followed in the darkness of the road.
Low muttering thunder fell upon my ear
And lightning flashes showed a storm was near.

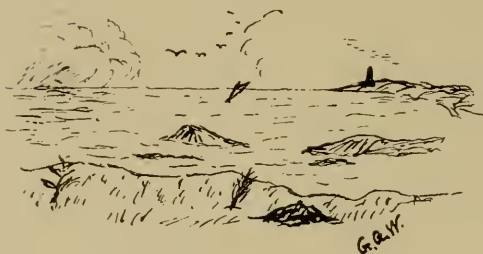
Just as he reached the home of Deacon B——,
He quickly turned, and I could see
His stealthy form in shadow creep
Beneath the room in which he lay asleep.
Still clasping tight his burden, with one bound
He leaped up to the window from the ground,
Nor paused for screen or sash, but boldly entered there.
—A scream, and mocking echo rent the air.—
Then doubly burdened soon he reappeared,
Leaped down toward the ground and—disappeared.

But from the dry, parched ground emerged
Blue tongues of kindling flame, that spread and surged
Against the drought-dried woodwork of the porch,
And soon the mansion seemed a blazing torch.
In that same moment came a blinding flash
Accompanied by a deaf'ning crash.
The storm that swept the vale below
But not the hill, had let a stray bolt go
To aid the conflagration, fierce and hot.
The glare soon brings the firemen to the spot.
His wife and family, saved, in tears beseech their aid
That some attempt to rescue him be made.
They break into his room—but soon retreat,
For nothing living could endure such heat.
They saw him—bolt upright in bed
With eyeballs fixed in agony and dread;
Both arms outstretched, with palms extended wide
As though some vision to repel or hide;
His lips half parted, but now fixed in death;
Encircled by the fiery breath
Of eager, fast devouring flame
That drove the firemen back to whence they came,
And ere they could subdue the fiery hell
Left not a bone for Christian burial.

Soon after, down below the cliff, some boatmen found
The body of a woman lately drowned;
All dressed in white,—no name, nor mark, nor note;—
She might have fallen from some passing boat.

THE FLOOD TIDE

OH, when the tide is coming in,
Mark well the shoals and reefs about,
As life's long journey you begin:—
Too soon the tide goes out.



THE MOTOR BOAT

SOME love the paddle, or the oar,
And some, the white winged craft adore,—
Not I!

Of all the natty craft afloat,
Give me the speedy Motor-boat!
We're off! Good-by!

Let Izaak Walton's anglers ply
Their art with rod, and grub, and fly!
Not I!

For fishing I don't care a groat,
When speeding in the Motor-boat.
We're off! Good-by!

THE OLD SQUIRE'S VINDICATION

GATHER 'round me, my children, and listen to me,
While I tell you a story that you will agréé
Is as strange and uncanny as ever was told,
And enough to make even your warm blood run cold.

Almost thirty long years have gone by since the day
That I sought out a nice country village, to stay
For a week's recreation and quiet and rest;
For I knew at that time I was not at my best.

Now the house where I lodged was secluded and old,
Built of heavy cut stone, hid by ivy and mold;
In Colonial style, dating back to the day
When throughout our fair country Great Britain held sway.

From the road by the river-side nought could be seen
But its four noble columns, half hidden in green;
In the foreground, a lawn rolling down to the wall,
With its green acres broken by elms, old and tall.

Now, "mine host" was a scion of good English stock,
With a brogue handed down like the "grandfather's clock"
That had stood in the hall at the new nation's birth:
And the English, to him, were the salt of the earth.

That his handed-down dialect nothing might spoil,
He imported a wife from his ancestral soil.
And to hear them conversing would do your heart good,
In this quiet old house, on the edge of the wood.

He was ruddy and stocky, of perfect physique,
But a better life-partner no Briton could seek
Than the sweet little wife that had lightened his toil
Since he plucked this rare blossom from Old England's soil.

So our hostess and host were true lovers indeed,
And with all of his plans she most sweetly agreed:
Surely no one could doubt but this matron so trim,
Was like Adam's wife, Eve, made to order for him.

For a couple more thrifty no one could conceive,
And that both were past fifty was hard to believe;
And such rare common sense was possessed by the pair,
That no vague superstition could find lodgement there.

As it happened, my room was just back of the hall:
And the famous old paintings that hung on the wall,
And the rare antique furniture, solid and strong,
Made my modern belongings seem woefully wrong.

Of the strangest old relic of all I must tell.
Overhead, in a belfry, there hung a huge bell;
And though never, save once, had the great bell been rung,
Through a hole in the ceiling the bell-rope still hung.

Now it seems, back in 1775,
Runs the story that gossip had still kept alive,
That the great bell's alarm woke the still Summer night
And aroused all the inmates in panic and fright.

And they found, as at last they broke into the room,
As the candle's weak flare penetrated the gloom,
The Old Squire hanging lifeless, and long past all hope
As he hung, cold and limp, by a noose in the rope!

And the old built-in safe, by the side of the clock,
Was found empty, ajar, with the key in the lock.
And it even was whispered, and questioned by none,
"He was at his rope's end, in more senses than one."

On this musty old tale, I retired to rest,
And my nervous condition was none of the best.
For such stories are never conducive to sleep;
And to look at the rope rather made my flesh creep.

And the gloomy old portrait just facing the bed
Seemed to wish to express one last plea for the dead.
And in fact, in my mind, there was more than a doubt
If the facts in the matter were ever brought out.

For from all I could learn, no good cause did appear
For his act; as the homestead was then free and clear,
And the frivolous things that entangle the youth,
Did not seem to have tempted our Squire—forsooth.

And if fully determined to do himself harm,
Would he hit on a plan that would give the alarm?
And to find him stone dead! Surely some one among
Them would first seek the place whence the bell could be rung!

With such futile reflections still racking my brain
I would slumber and suddenly start up again;
Until physical weariness, winning the fight,
Brought sweet sleep that seemed good for the rest of the night.

It was just one o'clock, when I woke with a shock
As the hour was struck by the "grandfather's" clock.
And in spite of the heat, I was chilled to the bone,
And as helpless and mute as a figure of stone.

In the moonlight, that fell on the opposite wall,
Stood the Old Squire himself,—satins, laces and all!
And with finger on lip, and with hand behind ear
Seemed to wish to make sure no intruder was near.

As he stealthily opened and passed out the door,
I perceived that a change had come over the floor.
Of the carpet and boards, there was no more a trace,
For a floor of smooth stone had quite taken their place.

Through the door, the Old Squire's every move I could see
As he stepped to the safe, and inserted the key:
Then he threw wide the door, and drew out from its hold,
Four securely tied bags of what seemed to be gold.

And then back to his room with his hoard he repaired,
And as though not a moment of time could be spared,
Left the key in the safe, with the door wide ajar,
While he hastened the room door to lock and to bar.

In the moonlight I saw him inspecting the floor,
Made of closely laid tiles,—there were fifty or more:
But when just underneath where the heavy rope hung,
He stooped down,—and a stone on a hidden hinge swung.

Thus disclosed, was an aperture, scarce a foot square,
To the dark depths of which he then lowered with care
His long treasured-up hoard; and then took from his coat
And consigned with the rest, a mysterious note.

Then he hastened to lower the stone to its place,
And began back and forth in the chamber to pace:—
When a shadow was cast on the wall as I gazed,
And a window beside me was silently raised.

And just as he paused for a moment in thought,
A rope circled his throat, and was quickly drawn taut!
And before the poor victim could utter a sound,
His assailant sprang into the room with one bound!

Then he tightened the noose with his powerful arms
Till assured from that source there could be no alarms;
And then, leaving his victim stretched out on the floor,
He unfastened, and opened and passed out the door.

But a glance at the safe was enough to reveal
That its barren recesses held nothing to steal.
Then he paused in deep thought for a minute or more,
Then re-entered the room, and refastened the door.

Then he mounted a chair that had stood by the door;
Made a noose in the bell-rope, eight feet from the floor,
And removing the rope from his limp victim's throat,
Slipped the key in a pocket inside the Squire's coat.

He then, grasping the body, as though it was light,
By an effort of almost Herculean might,
Raised it high on his back, and remounting the chair,
Passed the head through the open noose dangling in air.

But just then something happened. The chair seemed to sway,
And from out of his grasp the limp form slipped away;
Unexpectedly putting an end to his work,
As it plunged to the length of the rope with a jerk.

For just then, from the belfry, rang out a loud peal,—
Then a second—and third, made my stunned senses reel,
As the pull on the rope made the heavy bell sway.
And in dreamy confusion the ghosts fled away.

Then my powers returned, and I sprang to the door,
Where the clatter of feet could be heard on the floor;
And admitted "mine host" and the rest, with a light,
Who were roused by the bell in a panic of fright.

And as all were quite sure I had rung the old bell,
I could make no defense but the story I tell.
Which seemed lacking in proof to the matter of fact,
And indeed, at the time, that one merit it lacked.

But the keen searching gaze of "mine host" chanced to fall
On the Squire's life-size portrait that hung on the wall;
And a sharp exclamation escaped from his lips,
As he stood quite transfixed with his hands on his hips.

For the eyes, which seemed looking at nothing before,
Had now focused their gaze on a spot on the floor:—
And the hand, that once toyed with the pocket of lace,
Pointed out with its finger the very same place!

This peculiar coincidence, I must admit,
First appeared when our thoughts were directed to it.
For the spot pointed out, in the tale I had told,
Was the place where the Squire had hidden his gold.

But the safe door was locked, as a safe door should be,
And the hostess alone was possessed of the key;
But the clock, that for more than twelve decades had run,
Stood quite mute, with its hands at a quarter past one!

And as all were now eager to see the thing out,
And to prove out the tale, without shadow of doubt;
We proceeded at once to examine the floor,
Laid in hard wood for three generations or more.

That no cellar was under the room was well known,
But none present recalled that the floor had been stone:
But the carpet removed, and a board underneath,
Sure enough, a smooth flooring of stone lay beneath!

Then, just under the rope, we pried up enough board
To disclose the square stone under which should be stored
The rich hoard of the Squire. But we sought all around
And no trace of a hinge or a door could be found.

When at last we discovered a place where a chip
Broken from the next stone, thus afforded a grip;
So by prying at this, till our fingers were sore,
Soon we managed to tip it a half-inch or more.

Thus encouraged, the doubting ones soon took a hand,
And by using what effort we then could command,
With all hands pulling hard at the dust clogged-up crack,
Amid shouts of surprise, the square stone tilted back!

Underneath, was the hole by the stone long concealed,
By that night's ghostly pantomime strangely revealed.
And within it "mine host" was beginning to grope,
When his right hand struck something that kindled some hope

Then, from out the stone vault, he brought forth to the light,
Four old plump canvass bags, brown and musty, but tight;
And we found that the four, when the total was told,
Contained twelve thousand guineas in good English gold.

But the Squire left a note! I excitedly cried:—
And on looking within the dark vault we espied
The mysterious note:—and as I am alive,
Dated August the fifth, Seventeen Seventy Five!

And to prove it his writing, required but a look
At his autograph scrawled in the front of a book.
And the note ran like this: "To my oldest son Ned:—
Should this writing be found by you, I shall be dead.

"This anonymous message, that came but to-night,
Which I herein enclose you, has upset me quite.
So I place here my wealth, lest the warning prove true,
In this underground vault, only known to us two.

"Strange such evil forebodings oppress me to-night,
My emotions will hardly permit me to write.
But if nothing impends, it is needless at most."
Then we read the strange warning that came by the post.

"Beware of the stranger lodged under your roof,
And be sure that your coffers are quite burglar-proof!"
That same night, which explains how the secret was kept,
His son Ned had been stricken by death as he slept.

And the Squire's full length portrait still hangs the same way:
And the clock, once set going, is running to-day:—
So the Squire's vindication was thus brought about:—
That the money was welcome, there could be no doubt.

THE PARSON'S STORY

OR

THE PASSING OF A MAN

RECLINING in his easy chair an old man sat.
His head thrown back, his eyelids closed.
A smile upon his lips. Some reminiscence that
Had come to mind when first he dozed
Had left its impress. But upon that massive brow
And deep-set eyes and features strong
Were other traces. Sadder scenes than this that now
Lit up his face, had carved their imprint that had lingered long

I sat and looked upon that pleasant face that beamed
With light from heaven. Its sturdy mold
Was formed by sorrows, joys, and care and hope it seemed :
So strange a history it told.
I knew the story of his life. His pastor I
Had been for many years. To me
He opened once his heart, when no ear else was nigh,
A tender story his, of heart-aches keen as you shall see.

A distant city claimed his early life. By thrift
And energy he won his way
To competence and fortune fair. But time, that swift
Resistless current we obey,
Had borne him on to manhood, ripe and hale and clean.
He yearned for that he knew not what.
He saw a maiden fair as eye had ever seen,—
Or so he thought,—'Tis always so with those by cupid shot.

And she loved him with such discreet, responsive love
That could not be concealed, but made
The conquest of her heart a joyous siege, above
All joys already known. He laid
His manhood, fortune and his future at her feet.
And she could not refuse his plea.
'Twould seem that never union could be more complete
Or happy—till Death's angel spake, and said 'twas not to be.

What wound so rankling as when cupid's dart is torn
By Death's chill hand from hearts so warm!
No healing balm but Him who cheers the hearts that mourn,
Rebukes the wave, and calms the storm.
This healing came to him—the scar remained to-day.
The happiness to him denied
He sought by kindly act to help to pave the way
For others to attain, who for success on him relied.

The business tact and energy that won his way
To wealth, he also brought to bear
In aiding hearts that yearned, and strove and ached. No day
Without its story of some care
By him relieved, some life made brighter by his aid—
The hand oft-times concealed. Indeed,—
He felt the pain ingratitude inflicts, but made
No effort to disclose his part, and so receive his meed.

But in the field of trade in which he moved, there came
A band of knaves,—of rich brigands,—
Who viewed his clean success with jealousy. They name
Their terms of purchase,—make demands
On threat of ruin. Well he knew what it would mean
To those whom he employed to yield
To such as they. With courage rare and foresight keen
He fought them, made provision for his men;—and left the field.

And so he came to us. His voice was seldom heard
In public, but his deeds were known
To all. No act of sympathy or kindly word
Did he withhold. He went alone,
To homes distress had darkened, and where death had come,
Or sick ones languished. Children ran
To meet him as he passed along. 'Twas said by some [man.
That there was one whose face seemed strangely dear to this old

That "life consisteth not in that which we possess"
He long ago had learned. To give
Meant more to him than to obtain. 'Twas happiness
To him, to give it. And to live
In self-forgetfulness had quieted the pain
In his own heart.
I rose to go
And touched his hand to waken him,—but all in vain—
The smile still lingered on his lips,—the hands were cold as snow.

THE SINGER,—SILENT

In Memory of

MRS. SARAH BACH HOLDEN

THE singer's voice is hushed. Its silvery tones
Shall fall on human ear, alas, no more.
Earth feels her loss indeed, but Heaven owns
One minstrel more to grace its peaceful shore.

We miss the sparkling eyes, the gentle grace,
The pleasant smile, the radiant, soulful face;
Illumined by celestial light it seemed:—
Nearer the source than we had even dreamed.

She caught on earth a sweet, celestial chord
Of harmony, that Earth could not afford;
Her yearning soul, entranced, burst forth to find
A place where discords all are left behind.

Yes, place her where the wild-bird thrills his lay
With throbbing heart above the voiceless dead;
For so the singer sang her life away;—
Let nature protest at such silence dread.

THE SLEIGH-RIDE

HEAR the jingle, jingle, jingle
Of the merry, merry bells!
How the cheery voices mingle
With the jingle, jingle, jingle
Of the bells, through the dells.
Our sleighing party glides along
With laughter, shout and song.

Bashful beau and modest maiden,—
And some older folk you know,
With our precious burden laden,
Many a bashful beau and maiden
Off we go—o'er the snow!
Jack Frost will all forgotten be
When hearts are full of glee.

THE SPIRIT OF 'SEVENTY-SIX

I HAD dozed with my magazine grasped in my hand,
When a form seemed to me from its pages to rise,
And in faded blue uniform over me stand.

And the flash of a sword's bright steel fell on my eyes
As he said while on me his keen eyes he did fix,
"Up, and fight with the Spirit of 'Seventy-Six!"

"Though no royal born tyrant a tax would impose,
And no red-coated armies are threatening us now;
Still fair Liberty's menaced by deadlier foes;—
By vile traitors at home, should we tamely allow
Them to work out their dirty political tricks!"
Said the patriot Spirit of 'Seventy-Six.

"Shall we cowardly bottle and cork up our wrath,
When the half-starved offender is hustled to jail,
While the rich scoundrel gets an 'immunity' bath?
His campaign contributions will cease to avail
When we catch him repeating his rascally tricks!"
Quoth the irate old Spirit of 'Seventy-Six.

"There's the sleek financier, who would have you lay by
All the cash you can spare, to intrust to his care;
To help finance his Trust schemes to make living high:—
While he pockets the profits, and you are—nowhere.
But his plans will go wrong when the iron door clicks
At his back!" said the Spirit of 'Seventy-Six.

'See the 'people's attorney' asleep at his post,
While monopolists flourish, and mangle and rob,
And destroy legal records, and perjure and boast!
Should he seek for another political job,
He will find himself landed clean over the Styx,
With the help of the Spirit of 'Seventy-Six!"

'There's the Wall Street promoter, the 'confidence' man,
Who takes gilt-edged securities under the pump,
And then sells to the public at par if he can
What is more than half water! Full soon we will dump
On his own head his green goods, and gilded gold bricks!"
Spake the irate old Spirit of 'Seventy-Six.

'See the motley array of political crooks
In the pay of the rascals who fatten on 'loot'!
Watch them scamper to cover with terrified looks
As the ring-leaders feel the impact of my boot!
So we'll clean out the cesspool of graft politics
With a vim!" quoth the Spirit of 'Seventy-Six.

Not with death-dealing arms must the battles be fought.
Up! and use the free ballot our bullets have won!
And the sword of free speech that your brave sires bought
With their blood which still quickens each patriot son!
For no cowardly partisan ever can mix
With the patriot Spirit of 'Seventy-Six."

awoke. He was gone. But I realized then,
As the bold editorial columns I scanned,
That the Spirit still lived, and was leading true men
In the struggle for freedom for all our fair land
From the reign of the grafter, and Trust-breeding cliques
That have roused the grim Spirit of 'Seventy-Six.

TO A HYMN WRITER

O HOLY bard! Thy words inspire
Within our hearts a fond desire
To see our God. Still may thy pen
Write deeply on the hearts of men.

Oh sing a song of long ago,
When locks are white, and heads bend low;
Or seize the ancient minstrel's lyre
To warm young hearts with sacred fire.

Sweep o'er our nature's tensive strings,
That peace may come, and care take wings:
In busy rush, or solitude,
Subdue our spirit's every mood.

A hymn for joy:—A hymn for pain:—
And when we part to meet again:—
And when we part to meet no more
Upon this shore:—Upon this shore.

TO REV. H. H. BROWN

To you, at all times kind and neighborly,
Your neighbors wish the best prosperity :—
Too soon your kindly face we may not see.

And as this neighborly relation ends,
We trust this busy little clock may be
A timely gift to speak of old time friends,
Recording many happy times to come
When these old times have memories become.

WINTER

Oh, Jack Frost has been busy with wonderful skill,
In the dead of the night he has worked with a will,
And his etchings now cover each pane.

Fairy woodland and valleys and mountains galore,
Sylvan lakes set in diamonds afloat and ashore,
Wonders built in a night, as in fairy-land lore,
For Winter is with us again.

And the snow's ghostly mantle is spread over all,
Lying deep upon meadow and fence-rail and wall,
And each tree wears its garment of white.
Soon the jingle of sleigh-bells is heard far and near,
And the chill of the air yields to mirth and good cheer,
For the days are superb, and the nights crisp and clear,
And made bright by the snow's mystic light.

Then hurrah for old Winter, its ice and its snow!
With its skating and coasting that make young hearts glow!
And the merry bells ringing in tune!
When old Santa drops in with his reindeer and sleigh,
And our thoughts turn again to the first Christmas Day
When the "Star in the East" drove Earth's darkness away,
For Winter will leave us full soon.





JAN 13 1989

